

# GreenTown Fox Valley sets agenda and speakers for April 27 event

 [dailyherald.com/article/20170414/submitted/170419213/](http://dailyherald.com/article/20170414/submitted/170419213/)

4/13/2017

GreenTown, a one-day experience designed to create healthy, sustainable communities, announced the agenda and speakers for the event, which returns to Aurora, Illinois, on Thursday, April 27, at Two Brothers Roundhouse.

"GreenTown Fox Valley is an outgrowth of the Fox Valley Sustainability Network," said Cecilia Govrik, resource management coordinator with Kane County. "We're joining the public and private sectors to build a network of communities, businesses and citizens that will ultimately create a healthy, sustainable and a vibrant Fox Valley."

From 9:15 to 9:30 a.m., Jack Darin, executive director of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, will provide an overview of the federal government's changing environmental policy, various projects, changes to the EPA and the potential impact on sustainability and Illinois.

Elizabeth Doris Brown from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory will speak at GreenTown regarding national trends in solar and how local communities are advancing renewable energy from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

Key speaker presentations will be followed by sustainability-themed breakout sessions and opportunities to become involved in projects generated by the Fox Valley Sustainability Network.

- From 10:45 a.m. to noon, Edith Makra, director of environmental initiatives for the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, will lead a breakout session on "The Greenest Region Compact: Sustainability Planning Simplified." The compact is a comprehensive sustainability pledge and tool for creating local, tailored sustainability plans.

The GRC2 was built using the ongoing sustainable programs and actions that communities are already doing; and the sustainability plans that leading communities have already adopted. This makes it useful to communities of all sizes and strengths.

This session will introduce the GRC2; discuss the results of the extensive research on community sustainability; and demonstrate how to use the GRC2 Framework to create a sustainability plan for your community. AS a bonus, communities preregistered to attend GreenTown may receive a snapshot of their sustainability achievements during this session.

The other morning breakout session will cover several transportation topics relevant in the Fox Valley region, including general regional transportation trends, shared mobility modes, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's role in regional trends and the Fox Valley bike share program. Speakers include: Joe Schwieterman, director of the Chaddick Institute; Tim Frisbie, communications and policy director for Shared-Use Mobility Center; Lindsay Bayley, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; and Eric Gallt, engineer, City of Aurora.

- From 1:15 to 2:30 p.m., there will be three breakout sessions. Hear from three leaders of efforts to sustain and improve the water quality, habitat and recreational amenities of the Fox River. Its quality as a source of drinking water for over 300,000 residents, the habitat the Fox River provides for fish and other aquatic life, and the recreational opportunities afforded by this centerpiece of the Fox River Valley are all important matters as we consider the vital role the river plays in our communities.

There also will be some discussion on how to work together to advance these efforts. Speakers include: Karen Miller, executive planner, Kane County Development & Community Services Department; Frank Veraldi, fish biologist/restoration ecologist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District; Kyla Jacobsen, utilities director, City

of Elgin Water Department. The moderator will be Cindy Skrukrud, Clean Water Program Director at Sierra Club Illinois and chair of the Fox River Study Group.

Another session will be on "Food Recovery and Composting in Waste Diversion" with Jen Nelson of Seven Generations Ahead and Jeannine Kannegiesser of Northern Illinois Food Bank. The third session will be "Making the Fox Valley an Eco Tourism Destination/Driving Transit-Oriented Development in the Fox Valley" with Steve Buchtel, executive director, Trails for Illinois; Bonnie Lee Kunkel, Aurora GreenFest; Jim Hughes Jr., CEO of Next Generation Development; and Jordan E. Glazov, principal, Realtelligence LLC.

- From 2:45 to 4 p.m., choose one of three breakout sessions. "Building a Local Food Shed in Kane County: Opportunities and Challenges" will feature speakers Nate Summer, Heritage Prairie Farm in Elburn; Carol Rauschenberger, Shared Harvest Co-op in Elgin; and David Miller, CEO and co-founder, Iroquois Valley Farms LLC in Evanston. The moderator will be Matthew Tansley, planner, Kane County. Bill Stoll of Applied Ecological Services, Emily Okallau of Morton Arboretum Community Trees Program and Ryan Anderson of Midwest Pesticide Action Center will discuss "Natural Areas Management." "Becoming a Solar-Ready Fox Valley" will feature speakers Mark Pruitt, Community Choice Aggregation; Vito Greco, Elevate Energy; Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus; and Zach Greene, SolSmart. The moderator will be Cecilia Govrik, Kane County Division of Environmental & Water Resources.

GreenTown Fox Valley will give attendees an understanding of: changes happening at the federal level with regard to sustainability and its impact at the local level; the growing momentum around renewables and how local communities and states are incorporating renewables; and the opportunities for Illinois with the new Future Energy Jobs Act.

The day also will feature a GreenTown first with the "Idea Factory" challenge, a "Shark Tank"-style competition, from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.

The selected presentations will focus on the event's main topic categories of water, energy, green infrastructure, transportation, economic development, waste and food. The ideas proposed must be fundable projects that could be implemented over the next 24-months in the Fox Valley region. The "Idea Factory" presentations are not a competition for funding.

A panel of judges from the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley and the Fox Valley Sustainability Network selected the participants who will present during the "Idea Factory" at GreenTown.

To see the Greentown agenda, visit [www.greentownconference.com](http://www.greentownconference.com).

"GreenTown: The Future of Community" is a one-day experience that serves as a catalyst to sustainability planning and implementation. GreenTown has been held 20 times in four states since the first GreenTown event in 2007. Aurora hosted GreenTown in 2008 and 2015. GreenTown is an outstanding engagement tool in creating healthy places.

The Fox Valley Sustainability Network is an outgrowth of GreenTown Aurora in 2015. An ongoing entity working on various issues and projects with a series of action-oriented events, the Fox Valley Sustainability Network provides opportunities to learn together, collaborate on sustainability planning and implementation, seek funding and report progress. To learn more about the Fox Valley Sustainability Network, visit [www.foxvalleysustainabilitynetwork.com](http://www.foxvalleysustainabilitynetwork.com). Follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

**Get articles sent to your inbox.**



[Click here to sign up for the Elgin Newsletter](#)

